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## EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

[Continued from page 112.]

### PLYMOUTH.

ABINGTON. One half is divided equally among the districts, and one half according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$186 16. Vocal music in three schools.

BRIDGEWATER. One half is divided equally among the districts, and one half according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$86 07.

CARVER. Money is divided according to the number of persons in each district between the ages of 4 and 16 years. Lowest sum, \$14.

DUXBURY. One third is divided equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$125.

EAST BRIDGEWATER. One third is divided equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age.

HALIFAX. Money is divided equally among the districts,—\$100 to each.

HANOVER. One half is divided equally among the districts, and one half according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$96 46. Vocal music in two schools.

HANSON. Money raised by the town is divided according to the number of scholars. Money received from the State equally among the districts. Lowest sum, \$54 69. Vocal music in two schools.

HINGHAM. The town is not districted. Most of the schools are kept through the year. Vocal music in three schools.

HULL. No return from committee.

KINGSTON. One third is divided equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$34 82. Vocal music occasionally in three schools.

MARSHFIELD. One third equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$122 29.

MIDDLEBOROUGH. Fifteen dollars are first given to each district, excepting two, which receive only \$7 50; the residue is divided according to the number of polls in each district.

NORTH BRIDGEWATER. One half is divided equally among the districts, and one half according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$124 65. Vocal music in one school.

PEMBROKE. One third equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$79 75.

PLYMOUTH. Money is divided according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$21 70. Vocal music in seven schools.

PLYMPTON. In 1818, the town was divided into six districts, and since that time the money has been equally divided between them,—about \$100 to each. Vocal music in two schools, occasionally.

**ROCHESTER.** Seven hundred dollars are divided equally among the districts, and \$1246 73, (raised by the town and received from the State,) according to the number of persons under 21 years of age. Lowest sum, \$51 70.

**SCITUATE.** One fourth is divided equally among the districts, and three fourths according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$103 46.

**WAREHAM.** One fourth is divided equally among the districts, and three fourths according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$50.

**WEST BRIDGEWATER.** Money has been divided for a few years past, on an "arbitrary" apportionment, varying from \$151 71, to \$87 05. Vocal music in one school.

#### BARNSTABLE.

**BARNSTABLE.** One third is divided equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of "children." Lowest sum, \$70.

**BREWSTER.** Three fourths are divided among the "four principal schools," and one fourth to the other two. Lowest sum, \$50.

**CHATHAM.** Money raised by the town and received from the State is equally divided among the districts.

**DENNIS.** Money is divided according to the number of persons between the ages of 4 and 16 years, excepting one district, which being entitled, on this apportionment, to only thirteen dollars, receives \$25.

**EASTHAM.** For several years, the money has been equally divided among the districts.

**FALMOUTH.** Twenty dollars are first given to each district, and the residue is divided according to the number of persons in each district under 21 years of age. Lowest sum, \$50 57.

**HARWICH.** One third is divided equally among the districts, and two thirds according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$75 45.

**ORLEANS.** Money is divided equally among the districts,—\$100 to each. Vocal music in eight schools.

**PROVINCETOWN.** Money is divided according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$23 80.

**SANDWICH.** Two thousand dollars, together with the interest of the Surplus Revenue, are divided according to the number of scholars; \$108 are divided among the districts whose share of the \$2000 does not amount to \$75. Lowest sum, \$56 96.

**TRURO.** Money is divided according to the number of scholars. Lowest sum, \$36 72.

**WELLFLEET.** Money raised by tax is divided according to the number of families in town,—all other moneys according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age. Lowest sum, \$69 40. Vocal music occasionally in five schools.

**YARMOUTH.** Money is divided according to the number of persons between 4 and 16 years of age.

#### DUKES COUNTY.

**CHILMARK.** Committee did not answer the question.

**EDGARTOWN.** Money is so divided that all the schools may be kept an equal number of months. Lowest sum, \$80 16.

**TISBURY.** Money is divided according to the number of scholars between 4 and 16 years. Lowest sum, \$26 79.

#### NANTUCKET.

**NANTUCKET.** All the schools are kept during the year. Vocal music in seven.

A question now arises, whether these numerous and heterogeneous methods are not susceptible of improvement. If this

be decided in the affirmative, then another question comes up, namely;—what is the true principle, according to which school moneys should be distributed by towns among their districts? It seems to me that the abstract principle is a clear one,—one, which the judgment and the moral sentiments of every true friend of his country and his race, ought to approve; but still the practical application of this principle is attended with very serious difficulties. Some districts are very populous, others have but few inhabitants; some are very wealthy, others very poor. The territory of some is very extended, of others, very limited. Probably there are no two districts, in any town in the State, whose circumstances are precisely alike. Those whose duty it is to decide the question of distribution are always more or less interested in the decision they are themselves to make. In all cases this decision must be more or less a matter of discretion,—of compromise between conflicting reasons, each of which is worthy to be followed to a certain extent, or up to a certain point; but, beyond that point, each of which will work inequality and mischief. Now it is in this class of cases that our fallible nature is most likely to err,—the selfish propensities working out their will and accomplishing their ends, under the guise, and apparently with the sanction of the moral nature. How difficult, under such circumstances, to do as we would be done by,—to hold the balance in whose opposite scales are our own and our neighbor's rights, with an untremulous hand. Suppose the sum of money raised by a town for the support of its schools, to be two or twenty thousand dollars; suppose this money to be laid in a pile, upon a table, and the whole town, or its authorized agents, to be assembled and seated around, for its partition. Suppose the arbiters of the question to be animated by selfishness alone,—each one intent upon grasping as much as he can, without using the robber's violence, though animated by some of the motives that goad on the robber. Each one, under these circumstances, would draw his imaginary lines across the heap, in such a way as to throw the largest possible share into his own hands; and each also would attempt to adjust his principles to his lines. How many conflicting lines would be drawn; into what different proportions would the mass be cut up! Could a few of the first have the shares they covet, what would be left for the last?

On the other hand, suppose patriotism and philanthropy to be umpires for making the award. Suppose all the children in the town to be assembled before this tribunal. Would not the only question which any one would dare to propound, be, in what manner the appropriation of the town should be distributed so as to produce the greatest amount of good; and, as far as possible, to dispense that good with an impartial hand, among the rising generation? What plea would be presented, or could, for a moment, be entertained, why some fifty or one hundred of these children, from the mere circumstance of local residence, or from any chance or accident whatever, should be selected for the enjoyment of double or three-fold the advantages of any

other group of fifty or one hundred? To the question, for whose good is the money to be expended, is not the answer clear?—for the good of the children, for the good of the community, for the good of mankind. Children are not educated for themselves alone, nor for their parents alone; but also for the State, for the country and the world. No greater calamity can befall us, than that our children should grow up without that knowledge and cultivation which shall prepare them to become good fathers, mothers, neighbors, citizens, men. It is embodied in all our political creeds, that the summit of social happiness can never be reached except under republican constitutions; and no chimera more absurd ever entered the brain of the wildest dreamer, than that republican constitutions can long exist without intelligence and morality. We believe that every man has a natural right to the rewards of his own industry and talent. But the right of property cannot be upheld without just laws; and just laws can be sustained only on the basis of a people's knowledge and virtue. Expend our means for the training of a hundred good men, at the same time allowing one bad associate to grow up amongst the number, and that one bad man will punish our improvidence, by jeopardizing the welfare of all the rest. One bad man can destroy more worldly good than a hundred can create or replace. One can scatter moral infections that no arts of spiritual healing can wholly neutralize. All the powers of the mightiest nation can never prevent bad men from doing wrong. The only way to diminish the amount of wrong in the world, is to diminish the number of bad men. I conclude, therefore, that every philanthropic and Christian view which we can take of the question,—how shall our educational resources be distributed?—points to a distribution of them, which shall afford, as nearly as possible, an equality of advantages for all the districts in the town. If districts differ greatly in point of wealth, why should the tax-money received from each, be handed back to it as soon as collected? What relation has the number of families, or the number of ratable polls, or the number of persons over twenty-one years of age, or the number of houses in a district, to the true question;—how can all the children be best developed and replenished in intellect, best purified and refined in taste and sentiment, best principled and impassioned in morals? So of an equal distribution between unequal districts. Why would it be more absurd to pay back to each individual, the amount of school tax received from him, than to return to each school district, the amount received from its inhabitants. On no one of these principles does the town support its poor, or erect its bridges, or repair its roads. The highways of the county would present a remarkable spectacle, if the tax for their support which each man pays, were to be expended upon the portion of the road passing through his lands or by his mansion, so that the goodness or badness of our highways should be an index of the wealth or poverty of each man, along whose farm or by whose doors they lie. Yet this would not be a stranger spectacle to the natural eye than it is to the moral, to see one



district in a town with almost a redundancy of educational means,—a fine schoolhouse, competent teachers, libraries, apparatus, &c., while another district in the same town, in point of educational resources, is kept on the list of paupers or beggars. Is it not just cause of alarm, then, that the preceding schedule exhibits so many districts whose school money amounts only to \$20, or \$10, and in some instances, only to \$8?

But there is no *necessary* connection between an equality of privileges, and an equal distribution of the school money, *per capita*, amongst all children between the ages of 4 and 16 years. There are many reasons why the problem of distribution is more complicated than this. Some schools labor under the disadvantage of being too large; others, of being too small. The Legislature, by providing that every school, having more than fifty scholars, shall employ an assistant teacher, (unless the district passes an express vote to the contrary,) has intimated its opinion that fifty children are as many as one teacher can well govern and instruct. Universal experience ratifies this opinion. For schools, therefore, consisting of more than fifty children, there should be some equivalent, either in the length of the time, or in the superior qualifications of the teacher, to compensate for the disadvantage of numbers. But a school may be too small as well as too large; and hence may suffer from the want of that natural stimulus and excitement which all children feel when brought together. There should be a compensation for this class of schools also;—usually, however, if not always, this object can be secured in the manner to be noticed below. In some districts, the population is very sparse, the roads bad, and subject to obstructions in the winter from snow, and a majority of the children have a great distance to travel. A contiguous district may have an equal number of scholars, but be compactly situated, and its school always easy of access. In such a case, special interference should compensate for natural disadvantages. In regard to two districts, equal in the number of scholars,—in one, most of the scholars may be large, rendering it advisable to employ a male teacher; in the other, the children may be small, so that a female shall be preferable. Are not these circumstances, also, a fair subject for consideration in making the apportionment? Indeed, wherever the condition of a district is such as to render it expedient to employ a female teacher, that circumstance may well be taken into view. And after all, it will not be advisable to change the rule of apportionment, every year, in order to equalize slight differences; for the evil of a perpetual change may outweigh the evils it would remedy. Only one case occurs to me, where but half or less than half of the money which an impartial tribunal would otherwise award to a district, on the principles above stated, should be allowed to it. I mean a case where two or more districts, which can be united and ought to be united, refuse to join. In such a case, let them suffer the weakness that comes from folly, until they will practise the wisdom that confers strength.

## POWER OF TOWNS TO RAISE MONEY FOR SCHOOLS.

A topic not wholly unallied to the preceding, is, the legal power of towns to raise money for the support of schools. Discussions respecting the apportionment of money among districts, and suggestions for increasing the usefulness of our schools, would be nugatory, if towns could not raise money for the purpose. It would be in vain, also, that the pervading spirit of all our institutions should demand a thorough, generous, mind-expanding education for all our people, if there were no body-politic authorized by law to make the requisite pecuniary grants. This raises the direct question,—to what extent our municipal corporations may go, in granting money for the support of schools. This question is still debated; and as, in several instances, it has seriously interfered with the appropriation of moneys, which otherwise would have been unhesitatingly granted, it may not be amiss to consider some of the points on which the issue must be adjudicated.

It is admitted, by all parties, however, that the law requires, (and of course authorizes,) every town, to maintain schools of a certain aggregate length, which are to be kept by teachers having certain prescribed qualifications; and that all towns, without exception, falling below this aggregate in the length of its schools, and this prescribed grade in the qualifications of its teachers, become criminally responsible to the judicial tribunals of the State. But the question remains, whether any town may go beyond the exact requisitions of the law. Here, one party maintains that the minimum amount is also the maximum;—that is, when the law requires a town to maintain schools, for such or such a length of time, it impliedly prohibits the town from maintaining schools for a longer period. The argument restricts the legal *power* to the legal *duty*; so that when the *duty* is performed the *power* is exhausted. It is said that towns have no discretion, as to the amount of their grants; but only as to the mode of expending the limited sum they are authorized to raise.

For instance, the law requires that every town in the Commonwealth, however low its valuation, or few its numbers, shall keep, each year, one school for six months, or two or more schools, for terms of time, that shall together be equivalent to six months. If the number of families or householders in the town amounts to one hundred, then one school shall be kept for twelve months, or two or more schools, for terms that together shall be equivalent to twelve months. As the number of inhabitants increases, the required length or number of the schools, also increases. Now the point maintained is, that when towns have supported schools, for the prescribed period, their authority is exhausted. Being corporate bodies, incapable of originating powers, but deriving whatever powers they possess, from the law, when that is done which the law commands to be done, both the power and the obligation come to an end.

The same view is sometimes taken in regard to the studies or branches, which may be legally taught in our schools. Re-

specting the lowest grade of schools known to the law, the statute declares that they shall be kept by teachers of competent ability and good morals, for the instruction of children in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic and good behavior. On the same ground as before, it is argued, that these are the only branches which can legally be taught in this grade of schools;—that composition, rhetoric, logic, book-keeping, the elements of natural philosophy, the history of the world, or even that of our own country, &c., &c., are not merely unprovided for, in our common district schools, but that their introduction is impliedly forbidden. According to the same view, the employment of a teacher, of the most high and varied attainments, *provided a greater compensation be given him, on account of his superior competency*, would also be illegal. Such is the argument, on the one side, as far as I have been able to learn and to understand it, on the subject of a town's power to grant money for schools.

On the other side, it is maintained that the length of schools and the range of studies prescribed by the statute, are the minimum but not the maximum;—that while every town is obliged to do so much, no town is prohibited from doing more;—and therefore, that any town may sustain schools for any portion of the year and for any grade of studies, which its own discretion may dictate, subject only to the limitation which binds all bodies politic and corporate, of legislative creation; namely, that their powers shall not be exercised wantonly or fraudulently. By this construction the powers of the towns, though not wholly unlimited and indefinite, still are not specifically fixed and bounded; but they contain a germ of expansion, through whose developments our school system may be enlarged from year to year to meet the increasing wants of the community,

In speaking of the two parties, however, which respectively espouse the opposite sides of this question, I would not be understood to say that there is any comparison between them as to numbers. The above questions have been two or three times started at the Common School conventions; they have been propounded in some half dozen of the school committees' reports; my advice has been occasionally asked by letter; and, in one instance, the subject has been extensively discussed in the public papers.

But, on the other hand, the almost universal practice of the State, has been on the side of a liberal construction of the law; and, should it now be found, on an appeal to the highest judicial tribunal, that this construction is erroneous, probably there is not a town in the State, whose taxes for the support of schools have not been granted and levied in violation of law; and hence have been void for excess.

On a subject so important, if there are data for the formation of a satisfactory opinion, it seems desirable that they should be set forth; so that the public mind, if that be practicable, should rest securely in its convictions, and the advancement of our schools be disencumbered of these embarrassments. With respect and deference, therefore, to the opinions of those from



whom I feel obliged to dissent, I propose to submit a few considerations, tending to show, not only that the genius of our government and the necessities imposed upon us by the nature of all our political and social institutions;—not only the interest and the honor of the Commonwealth, but also that both the spirit and the letter of our laws, fortified by all contemporaneous exposition, sustain the more liberal construction of the statute, to which I have referred.

The proportion of students in all the incorporated academies in the State, when compared with the whole number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 years, belonging to the State, is a little less than one in fifty. There are private schools, under the different appellations of select schools, high schools, &c., where some of the higher branches are also taught. But in towns which maintain no town high school, or school which, in the language of the law, is "kept for the benefit of all the inhabitants," nineteen twentieths, at least, of all the children, receive all the school education which they bring into life, at the district school. Only about forty of the three hundred and eight towns in the State, are required by law to keep a school of a higher grade than the Common School; and, on complying with a condition, to be noticed below, this class of towns can exempt themselves from the obligation to maintain such higher schools. Suppose then, the ability of our system of Common Schools to confer an enlarged and generous education, to be curtailed and shrunk to the mere teaching of the elements,—orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, and arithmetic;—and suppose the schools themselves to be restricted to the period mentioned in the law,—and what a meagre, parsimonious, impoverished education, would nineteen twentieths of the children of the State receive. The aggregate length of the Boston schools, last year, was *one hundred and thirty-one years*; that is, the city had one hundred and thirty-one schools which, with only the customary vacations, were kept through the year. It has a Latin school, an English high school, sixteen grammar schools, and one hundred and thirteen primary schools. According to the narrow construction of the law, which is proposed, its Latin and its English high school must be merged in one; and its sixteen grammar and one hundred and thirteen primary schools, must be reduced to an aggregate of only twenty-four months! But the diminution in the length of the schools which would follow from such a construction of the law, is not more alarming than would be the simultaneous contraction of the range of studies. As was said above, these would be brought down to the elementary branches. Let us glance for a moment at the prospective condition of the State, should a construction of the law prevail, so deeply affecting the education of its children.

The people of Massachusetts, to a greater extent than those of any other State in the Union, are a mechanical people. The inventive genius and practical skill of our citizens, in their applications to the useful arts of life, have given a commonness to comfort, and a wide-spreading expansion to physical enjoy-



ment and well-being, such as are not possessed by any other community of equal numbers, on the face of the globe. We have more than eighty-five thousand persons engaged in manufactures and trades, which number represents a population of at least three hundred thousand, or six fifteenths of all the inhabitants of the Commonwealth. With this wide range of every-day business and occupation, the first principles of natural and of mechanical philosophy have the most intimate connection. Our pecuniary well-being as a people, the individual competence and independence of our citizens, are depending more and more upon our skill and progress in these departments of industrial labor. Shut out all branches of natural philosophy from our schools, exclude those seminal ideas and principles upon which and with which, inventive genius afterwards works,—from which, talent is constantly evolving new applications of the forces and affinities of nature, and thus ameliorating and advancing the condition of man,—and what an inappreciable amount of actual good would be prevented, to say nothing of positive evils which would be incurred. And, as applicable to this subject, let me say, that we are responsible for the good we prevent, as well as for the evil we commit.

In navigating the ocean,—and therefore, directly or indirectly in foreign commerce,—a proportion of our people is engaged, more than twenty times greater than the average of the other States in the Union. Of course there must be inland trade or commerce, growing out of this foreign traffic, which moves, annually, an enormous amount of capital. But the construction of the law, against which I am contending, would exclude navigation, geometry, book-keeping, all commercial studies, &c., from our schools; and it would send men into the varied departments of domestic and inland trade and of foreign commerce, without any specific preparation for their immediate wants.

The elective franchise is enjoyed so extensively amongst us, that it falls but one degree below universal suffrage. For the fit exercise of this inestimable boon of freemen, is not some knowledge of political philosophy and of the history of our own State and nation, of their origin and their various institutions, a prerequisite? Shall the citizen wait until he is called to legislate, before he begins to study the principles of legislation? Shall not accurate views of the nature of government precede the authority to govern? Yet, banish the study of all history and of political philosophy or the science of government from our schools, as such a construction would do, and how many of the future sovereigns of our State and of our Union, would succeed to the possession of political rights without the knowledge indispensable to their intelligent and judicious exercise.

Astronomy is now taught in many of our Common Schools. This is one of the sublimest fields of human investigation. The mind that grasps its facts and principles receives something of the enlargement and grandeur belonging to the science itself. It is a quickener of devotion. All its problems and its truths not only expand the intellect, but they are effusive of a religious

influence. Reduce the range of Common School studies, as is proposed, and this exciter of the intellect, this handmaid of religion, is banished from the schoolroom.

Human Physiology,—a knowledge of the laws and conditions of Health and Life,—is now becoming common in the better class of schools, throughout the State. The uses, the adaptations, the exquisite contrivances of the human system, are so wonderful, so beautiful and so attractive, that I have heard it said by an eminent teacher,—who deeply loved the study himself,—that when his class in physiology was reciting, it was impossible to make the rest of the school study, or attend to, anything else. Exclude this, and thousands of our people would continue to practise their fatal quackeries and their idiot charms, for the removal of disease and the prolongation of life.

The mass of our people are exceedingly active-minded and inquisitive. Reading is their pastime to a greater degree than is true of any other people, of equal numbers, to be found in the world. Yet they do not read one fourth part so much as they might read, and as they should read;—not for the purpose of positive improvement only, but for the expulsion of low tastes and degrading vices. Yet, if taught to read merely, if left without any means for cultivating a refined and literary taste, if ignorant of the laws of evidence and the axioms of reasoning;—that is, if unacquainted with the principles of Rhetoric and Logic,—they will be without some of the best antidotes against the degrading and poisonous products of the modern press.

Is Botany any where studied in connection with our schools,—this construction of the law would drive in the children from their healthful exploration of the fields of nature. Is Chemistry any where pursued,—a science so intimately connected with agriculture, with many of the mechanical trades, and with not a few of the household arts,—it would arrest the progress of children in this direction, and turn them back from the new world of marvels and of utilities, which chemistry reveals. In fine, in regard to all these subjects, respectively so important to temporal well-being, to the right performance of political duties, to taste, intellect, character, morals,—in regard to all these subjects, if we say,—let the mass of the rising generation get their knowledge where they can, it would be equivalent to saying, in ninety-nine cases in every hundred, that they shall get it nowhere.

But this circumscription of the general intellect, this reduction of the mental stature to a pigmy's dimensions, is only one of a formidable company of evils which would follow the exclusion of all the higher branches of study from our Common Schools; especially if the minimum of time during which the schools are required to be kept is to be the maximum also. Would not the character of the teachers be correspondingly degraded? Who would become teachers, if, in towns containing a dozen or even a score of districts, the aggregate length of the schools were not to exceed twelve or twenty-four months; and this brief period to be divided, as it now is, between summer and winter terms? The number of professional teachers in the public schools of the

State would dwindle to a handful. All eminence and skill in teaching would seek the patronage of wealth. Private schools would supplant the public; and the latter would become mere charity or pauper establishments, affording but the scantiest instruction for dwarfed and famished minds.

But again; suppose the mass of our young men to grow up to the period of adult life, without the acquisition of anything but the mere elements or rudiments of knowledge, with no general enlargement of mind, no expansion or opening of the faculties towards those different departments of nature for which they were designed and preadapted by their beneficent Creator, and what a vast chasm would at once yawn, between the neglected many and those favored few who had enjoyed the privileges of academical or collegiate education. At once, literary castes would arise in society, as haughty, as exclusive, as antagonistic, as the Brahminical. The community would be dissociated, gathered into clans, with but a few intermediate links in the social chain to serve as a medium of sympathy between the extremes. Men of active, inquiring, replenished minds, naturally seek their associates among men of active, inquiring, replenished minds. If they go in quest of the ignorant, the stockish, the brutified, it is only through the impulses of that divine missionary spirit which seeks the blessing of giving rather than of receiving good. This class of men, unhappily, is very small. Hence the chasm which our institutions, —not nature,—would have created, would remain unbridged. Intellectual castes would inevitably be followed by castes in privileges, in honor, in property, unless the latter should be destroyed,—as under our political institutions would be probable, if not certain,—by the blind rage and vindictiveness of their social inferiors.

I have referred only to the condition of the mass of young men in our community, if all instruction, excepting in the mere rudiments of an education, were abolished in our Common Schools; and if the length of those schools were to be reckoned by days, or even by weeks instead of months. But what would be the condition of nineteen twentieths of the young women of our land, if all beyond the elements of knowledge were to be forever, to them, a land of darkness? For whom would they be fit companions in life? With what literary and scientific tastes would such mothers imbue their children? What would be the character for intellect, refinement, elevation, of the generations that should succeed them? Of course, I speak of the great proportion,—of large majorities; for, doubtless there would be individual exceptions. Vigorous, talented, enterprising minds will emancipate themselves from the bondage of hereditary degradation, and win fortune, station, celebrity, by inherent, irrepressible power. But this number would be originally small, and, in every generation, it would grow less and less, unless some other cause should counteract the downward movement of the system; because a permanent bias,—a steady tendency in things, will forever cause them to approach nearer and nearer to the destined point; and finally, although it may



be after long intervals of time and many circuits of gradual approach, to reach it. A steady attraction, though slight, will prevail over great energy of centrifugal forces, acting intermittently.

In many of the more enlightened, yet arbitrary governments of Europe, where the great doctrines of human rights are dimly seen in theory, and still more dimly recognized in practice, a distinction prevails in regard to the education of the community at large, which should be sedulously excluded from a republican system. According to this distinction, all the avocations of men naturally arrange themselves under three heads. The first class embraces all those industrial employments where we act with material instruments upon material things,—*with matter upon matter*. This includes all mere manual laborers,—the hewers of wood, the drawers of water, ditchers, delvers, &c. In the second class, are comprised all those who act *by mind* upon matter,—the master-mason or architect, head-machinists, head-miners, foresters, engineers, &c. The third class are those who act by mind *upon mind*,—the orator, the poet, the historian, statesman, &c. Different courses of education are projected to meet the supposed necessities of these different grades. But how incongruous and absurd are these notions among a people, by the theory of whose institutions the chief magistracy of the State or of the nation is open to the poorest boy that is born in the land !\*

\* I subjoin a few extracts from the "North British Review," containing some historical sketches of the town of Paisley, in Scotland. They show with what fearful rapidity, a people that neglects the education of its children, will descend in the scale of poverty, degradation and crime. By the facts stated it appears, that not even the neglected generation itself will pass away, without punishing their social superiors for their dereliction from duty. Retribution descends suddenly upon the wealthy, the educated and the powerful, upon whose remissness, the vices, ignorance and guilt of the less fortunate classes in society, are to be primarily charged.

#### PAISLEY IN 1800—1844.

"Paisley is perhaps the most plebeian town of its size in Europe, its population being composed chiefly of weavers, with such accompanying trades and occupations as are dependent upon, or necessary for, the supply of weavers and weaving apparatus. From its proximity to Glasgow, Paisley can boast of few extensive manufacturers, many of its operatives being employed in Glasgow houses, through the medium of resident agents; and, having few home or foreign merchants of any note, it presents the extraordinary feature of almost an entire working population. As some important practical results, both of a moral and political nature, may be drawn from a review of its past and present history, it is our intention, in the present article, to take a cursory view of the *weavers*,—in other words, the general population of that town, from about the year 1775 or 1780 to the present day, contrasting its moral and intellectual character, at two or three distinct periods, and endeavoring to account for the sad declension in public manners which of late has been so obvious to the country at large.

"To state the simple fact, that the once quiet, sober, moral and intelligent inhabitants of Paisley, are now generally a turbulent, immoral and half-educated population, is to state what almost every one knows, what many mourn over, but for which few seem able to propose any remedy.

"It is indeed a melancholy subject for contemplation, that what was at first eagerly embraced by many as an addition to their family receipts, has ultimately proved, not a chief cause of individual poverty only, but of family feuds, insubordination on the part of children, and, as a natural consequence, a general moral degradation over the whole community. We allude to the practice, introduced about the year 1800, (when the manufacture of India imitation shawls was first



These are some of the considerations which serve to show the reasonableness of that construction of the law which has prevailed for generations, and for which I now contend. Still,

commenced,) of employing children as draw-boys from the early age of five or six to ten or eleven years,—a period of life, till then, uniformly spent in school, or in youthful amusements; but subsequently, from a rapid increase in this branch, all the available children were employed in the weaving-shop.

"From about 1770 to 1800, the manufacture of silk gauzes and fine lawns flourished in Paisley, as also, during a portion of the period alluded to, that of figured-loom and hand-tamboured muslin. These branches afforded to all classes excellent wages; and, being articles of fancy, room was afforded for a display of taste, as well as enterprise and intelligence, for which the Paisley weavers were justly conspicuous. Sobriety and frugality being their general character, good wages enabled almost every weaver to possess himself of a small capital, which, joined with their general intelligence and industry, enabled and induced many a one to spend days and even weeks together in plodding over a new design, assisted frequently by his obliging neighbors, knowing that the first half dozen weavers who succeeded in some new style of work were recompensed tenfold.

"Nearly one half of Paisley, at that period, was built by weavers from savings of their ordinary wages. Every house had its garden, and every weaver, being his own master, could work it when he pleased. Many were excellent florists, many possessed a tolerable library, and all were politicians; so that about the period of the French revolution, Mr. Pitt expressed more fear of the unrestricted political discussions of the Paisley weavers, than of 10,000 armed men. Had Paisley been then, what Paisley is now, crowded with half-informed radicals and infidels, his fears would have been justified; but truth and honest dealing could fear nothing from a community constituted as Paisley then was; and never, perhaps, in the history of the world, was there a more convincing proof of the folly of being afraid of a universal and thorough education, especially when impregnated with the religion of the Bible, than in the state of Paisley at that period.

"At the period alluded to, every man, woman, and child above eight or nine years of age, could read the Bible; many could write and cast accounts; and not a few of the weavers' sons went through a regular course at the grammar school. To have had a distant relative unable to read, or one sent to prison, would have been felt as equally disgraceful.

"The inhabitants were so universally regular in their attendance upon church, and strict afterwards in keeping in-doors, that it is recollected, at the end of the last century, or commencement of the present, that not a living creature, save two or three privileged blackguards, was ever seen walking the streets after divine service; or if any chanced to appear, an errand for the doctor was supposed to be the probable cause. Family duties were generally attended to; and prayer and praise were not confined to the Sabbath evening; for on week days as well as on Sabbath days, the ears of the by-standers were regaled with songs of praise issuing forth from almost every dwelling; and, in those days, it was no uncommon thing to find the highly respectable weaver a most consistent and truly useful elder of the church.

"At that period, the honest, quiet Whig or Tory weaver might be seen with his wife, at four or five o'clock, sallying forth on an evening walk, in full Sabbath attire; the husband in advance of his wife, carrying the youngest child in his arms, and his wife following, with two, three, or four older children; and, perchance, ere their return, a brother and sister-in-law were honored with a visit to a cup of tea, to which they experienced a hearty welcome. Nor were little luxuries on such occasions altogether unknown, a weaver then being able to afford them.

"Although early marriages were very common, yet the frequently attendant evils were not immediately felt; a lad of eighteen or twenty being quite as able to support a family as his father at forty; and he did not anticipate those days of darkness and privation which have since come on Paisley.

"We come now to the mournful cause of the present degraded state of that once moral and happy town; not that we imagine that the fluctuations of trade, arising from the change from a war to a peace system, have not affected that town in common with others; but these fluctuations would have passed over it with comparatively little injury but for the operative cause we are about to mention, which wrought its sure though silent influence upon the manners, habits and morals of the general population.

"The introduction of the manufactory of imitation India shawls, about the year 1800, required that each weaver should employ one, two, or three boys, called draw-boys. Eleven to twelve was the usual age, previous to this period, for sending

if, upon strict investigation, the letter and spirit of our legislative provisions for public instruction, will not sustain this view, we must submit to the law as it is, until the public voice shall demand and secure its amendment.

I propose now to examine a few of the express provisions of law relating to this subject.

The language of the Revised Statutes, conferring upon towns the power to raise money for schools, is in these words: "Towns shall have power to grant and vote such sums of money as they shall judge necessary for the following purposes; For the support of schools," &c.

Here, certainly, there is no *expressed* limitation. The phraseology which always implies discretionary power, is used. If

boys to the loom; but as boys of any age above five were equal to this work of drawing, those of ten years were first employed, then, as the demand increased, those of nine, eight, seven, six, and even five. Girls, too, were by and by introduced into the same employment, and at equally tender years. Many a struggle the honest and intelligent weaver must have had, between his duty to his children and his immediate interests. The idea of his children growing up without schooling must have cost him many a pang, but the idea of losing 2s. 6d., or 3s., or 3s. 3d. per week, and paying school wages besides, proved too great a bribe, even for parental affection; and, as might have been expected, *mammon* in the end prevailed, and the practice gradually became too common and familiar to excite more than a passing regret. Children grew up without either the education or the training which the youth of the country derive from the schoolmaster; and every year, since 1805, has sent forth its hundreds of unschooled and untrained boys and girls, now become the parents of a still ruder, more undisciplined and ignorant offspring. Nor was this all. So great was the demand for draw-boys, that ever and anon the town-crier went through the streets, offering not simply 2s. 6d., 3s., or 3s. 3d. a week for the labor of boys and girls, but bed, board and washing, and a penny to themselves on Saturday night. This was a reward on disobedience to parents. Family insubordination, with all its trains of evils, followed. The son, instead of standing in awe of his father, began to think himself a man, when he was only a brawling, impudent boy. On the first or second quarrel with his father, he felt he might abandon the parental roof, for the less irksome employment of the stranger. The first principle of all subordination was thus broken up, and the boy who refused to hearken to the voice of his father or his mother, and to honor them, could not be expected, when he became a man, to fear God, or to honor the king. If ignorance be the mother of superstitious devotion, it is also the mother of stupid and vulgar contempt. An intelligent and moral people will ever be most ready to give honor where it is due; and, respecting themselves, they will yield a willing respect to intelligence, virtue, rank and lawful authority, wherever it is placed.

This increase of the family receipts, arising from the employment of one or more children as draw-boys, ceased on the first slackness in the demand; for it is evident that the additional sum, we shall suppose of 5s. a week, drawn by the labor of the weaver's children, enabled him to work just at so much lower prices to any manufacturer who might choose to speculate in making goods at the reduced price, in the hope of a future demand. A short period of idleness on the part of the weaver would have given him time for the overstock of goods to clear off, whereas this practice of working even extra hours during the period of a glut, tended to perpetuate the glut, or to render fluctuations arising from this source more frequent; and, along with other causes, to perpetuate low wages. Thus was the employment of their children from five to ten, by the weavers of Paisley, at first an apparent advantage, but in the end, a curse; demonstrating that whatever may be the interests of parents this year or next year, it is permanently the interest of them and their offspring to refuse every advantage in their temporal concerns, which tends to deprive youth of the first of parental blessings, education; and that Providence has bound, in indissoluble alliance, the intelligence, the virtue, and the temporal well-being of society. In 1818-19, during the radical period, there were found full three thousand, Paisley-born and Paisley-bred, who could not read; and the decline of intelligence has been followed by the decline of that temperance, prudence and economy, which are the cardinal virtues of the working classes, by which alone they can elevate their condition, or preserve themselves from sinking into the most abject poverty."

this were all, might not the towns raise as much or as little as they should choose, for the purpose designated? But, by the 23d chapter of the Revised Statutes, this discretion is limited, in one direction. It is, however, nowhere limited in the other. The law requires a specified length of schools, to be kept by masters of good morals and competent to teach certain specified branches;—and any town falling below these requirements, in either particular, becomes amenable to the criminal tribunals of the State. But as to the aggregate length of the schools, the extent of the teachers' qualifications, or the number of branches to be taught in the schools, there is no expressed limit to the discretionary power of the towns. Of course, as in all cases of derived powers, however large the discretion, or unqualified the terms conferring it, it is implied that the authority given shall not be exercised wantonly or fraudulently, or for an object foreign to the purpose for which it was bestowed. Within these limits, it would seem, therefore, from the language of this part of the law, that a town may take parental affection and patriotism and philanthropy for its counsellors, and may be as liberal in its appropriations for schools, as its regard for the welfare of its children and for the prosperity of the nation, may dictate.

But there are two or three other provisions of law, which, when placed side by side with those already quoted, seem to be decisive of the question.

The Act of March 31, 1834, created a school fund, and opened adequate sources of revenue for its enlargement. The capital of the fund, however, by the terms of the Act, is never to exceed one million of dollars. Its income is to be distributed among the towns in the Commonwealth, according to the number of persons they respectively contain, between the ages of 4 and 16 years. By the act of March 18, 1839, it was provided that any town, on the non-performance of certain conditions, should forfeit its distributive share of the income of this fund. One of these conditions was, that the town itself should raise, by tax, for the wages and board of teachers and fuel for the schools, a sum equal to \$1 25 for every person belonging to it, between the ages of 4 and 16 years. Let us now take a single municipal corporation,—the city of Boston, for instance,—(and I take this as an example only;—any town can apply the reasoning to its own case,) and inquire what amount of money it must raise by tax, for these specific purposes, in order to entitle itself to participate in the benefits of the school fund. The number of children, belonging to the city, between the aforementioned ages, is now supposed to be at least 20,000. Hence it must raise \$25,000, by taxes, for its schools, or its share of the income is forfeited. That share on 20,000 children, at the present time, is about \$2,500. But as yet the school fund has not reached its maximum; and the interest accruing from a portion of it is added to the principal, and not distributed. Suppose the fund, however, to be a million of dollars, and the proportion of Boston would then be at least \$5000. Here then would be a sum of \$30,000 to be expended upon schools. This



money could be lawfully expended only for the three items of wages, board and fuel; and yet according to the argument I am combating, Boston can maintain only one high school, the year round; and an inferior grade of schools, in which only orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic shall be taught, for an aggregate length of time not exceeding twenty-four months. How then, could the city expend its money;—especially if it is held to be unlawful to pay higher compensation to teachers, on account of higher qualifications? By the supposition, the city cannot receive its distributive share of the school fund, unless it raises a certain sum of money; and yet it cannot raise this sum of money, because it would be unlawful for it to have schools of such a length and such a quality as that money would support!

A reference to one other legal provision will close what I have to say in favor of the discretionary power of towns to appropriate money for schools.

By the 5th section of the 23d chapter of the Revised Statutes, it is enacted that "every town containing five hundred families or householders, shall, besides, &c., maintain a school to be kept by a master of competent ability," &c.; and the law then proceeds to prescribe the qualifications of the master and the length of the school. But by the 76th chapter of the Statutes of 1840, it is enacted that "any town now required by law to maintain such a school as is described by the fifth section of the twenty-third chapter of the Revised Statutes, [the section above referred to,] shall be released from their obligation by raising and expending annually for the support of town or district schools, twenty-five per cent. more than the greatest sum ever raised by assessment, by said town, for the object, before the passage of this act."

Here then is an explicit provision by which any town in the Commonwealth may exempt itself from its legal obligation to maintain a school of a higher order, "for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town." This condition is fulfilled, by "raising and *expending* annually for the support of the town or district schools, twenty-five per cent. more than it had ever before raised," &c. Surely then, it must be *lawful*,—however inexpedient it might be,—to raise this additional sum and expend it upon Common Schools. The amount in Boston, on which this twenty-five per cent. must be computed would be not far from \$100,000. Add one quarter to this, and the sum *required to be raised*, would be about \$125,000. How can Boston expend more than \$125,000 for teachers' wages, and board, and fuel for the schools, if all the schools in the city are to be kept, in the aggregate, not more than twenty-four months, and by teachers, who are to be paid only for their competency to teach orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic?

[To be continued.]

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